DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 166 770 95 EA 011 181

TITLE	Teacher Supervision. The Best of ERIC, Number 42.
INSTITUTION	Oregon Univ., Eugene. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Jan 79
CONTRACT	400-78-0007
NOTE	5p.
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403 (free)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Beginning Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; *Student Teachers; *Teacher Supervision
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC; Information Analysis Products

ABSTRACT

Twelve annotations based on recent entries in the ERIC system concern supervision of teachers. Research studies cited deal with supervision of first-year teachers and student teachers, communications between supervisors and teachers and between supervisors and the community, and a history of developments in the field. Also included are suggestions for achieving better quality control, reducing teacher anxiety, using videotape techniques, and facilitating learning through effective supervision. (Author/LD)

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Number 42, January 1979

The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

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This issue was prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management for distribution by the Association of California School Administrators and the Association of Wisconsin Secondary School Administrators.

Teacher Supervision

1 **Brown, Max H.**, and **Willems, Arnold L.** "Lifeboat Ethics and the First-year Teacher." *Clearing House*, 51, 2 (October 1977), pp. 73-75. EJ 170 980.

First-year teachers, despite their inexperience and general lack of self-assurance, are usually saddled with a job description very similar to that of experienced teachers. The heavy workload is often combined with an environment in which the new teacher does not know where to turn for help in the maze of "bosses"—department heads, principals, and various specialized directors. As well, they often find that what they learned in college sometimes conflicts with classroom reality.

Given this situation of "lifeboat ethics" in which the experienced teachers are often in the lifeboat and the new ones forced to "sink or swim" on their own, it is inevitable that the potential of the first-year teachers is sharply curtailed.

In the light of this problem, Brown and Willems believe that "humanistic supervision can serve as a 'life-line'," and they outline three factors that can facilitate this kind of supervision.

"The function of supervision should be the improvement of teaching and learning." Therefore, evaluation is not the goal in itself, insofar as it does not directly lead to improvement. And the first-year teachers should know the expectations of the supervisors ahead of time.

The second factor is that the structure of the supervision plan should be kept simple and clearly spelled out. One suggestion is that initially the supervisor schedule visits with the first-year teacher and develop a supportive relationship before making unscheduled visits.

Supervisors being open, honest, and humane in their contacts with first-year teachers is the third factor. Survey results have shown that teachers believe honesty is the most important trait a supervisor can have and, further, that teachers cite communication as the most important link between teacher and supervisor.

2 **DeWitt, William.** "Instructional Supervision." *Educational Leadership*, 34, 8 (May 1977), pp. 589-93. EJ 164 123.

"Instructional supervision can only succeed as it becomes a part of, rather than apart from, the visible community which it must also serve." As this statement makes clear, DeWitt strongly advocates that supervisors develop an understanding of the goals and expectations of the community in which the school is located.

This understanding is necessary because of the current "social dissatisfaction with the schools and schooling." The problems caused by that dissatisfaction are heightened by a general attitude that "the schools are the exclusive province of educators and school boards, at least as far as the functionaries are concerned."

DeWitt decries what he sees as the inherent conservative nature of the supervision process, due primarily to the fact that supervisors are often those who have "earned their stripes" as teachers and/or second-level administrators. Thus, they are more "prone to operate as perpetuators of what was and is, rather than what is to be or should be." As well, community awareness and participation are rarely criteria used in selecting supervisors.

One of the main benefits from close involvement with the community is that eventually community goals and expectations will become visible in the classroom; then "the community joins the supervisor and teacher in promotion and revision of the embryonic programs, and they all 'buy-in' to a common product, a product that they understand."

DeWitt outlines an example of how supervisor-community cooperation can work. He describes a case study of an effort in Region One of the Detroit Public Schools to equip teachers to deliver services similar to those of specialists who were eliminated due to decreased enrollment. As soon as this problem was defined, a community council was established. The council, along with the teachers, participated in the entire process, from evaluation of alternative proposals to the selection and funding of the best proposal to the establishment of a pilot program.

3 **Diamond, Stanley C.** "Toward Effective Supervision of Classroom Instruction." *NASSP Bulletin*, 62, 418 (May 1978), pp. EJ 177 657.

"Youngsters and teachers, principals and supervisors, all lose if there is no opportunity for those whom supervision most affects to feed back into the process something of themselves." The democratization of teacher supervision is advocated very strongly by Diamond, who sees it as the key to supervision effectively fulfilling its purpose.

Teachers are becoming increasingly less responsive to supervisory authority that isn't accompanied by concrete helps for the teacher. Also, recent studies have shown that virtually all the teachers surveyed want to have some part in determining the process of evaluation.

Diamond points out that the current literature on supervision contains many innovative suggestions for giving the basic responsibility for change back to the teacher under the assumption

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that ultimately that is what will produce the most fruit. The movement toward democratization need not conflict with the supervisory task being tied very closely with the administrative task. The conflict can be overcome by spreading responsibility for both throughout the staff.

Diamond is convinced that teachers want to receive help, but that they must be able to contribute to the making of objectives for themselves that make sense. And they must be able to respect and trust their supervisors.

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4 **Diamonti, Michael C.** "Student Teacher Supervision." *Educational Forum,* 41, 4 (May 1977), pp. 477-86. EJ 163 579.

In this somewhat theoretical article, Diamonti raises some important questions regarding the efficacy of teacher supervision. He is focusing primarily on the supervision of student teachers, but many of the questions he raises apply to supervision in general.

It is generally assumed that student teaching is the most important part of a teacher's training. The two main guides the student teacher has are the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor—who is the one most often criticized for not succeeding at his task.

The reasons for that are many, but Diamonti suggests that the most important may be that supervision is one role in the training process that is not necessary—at least as it is practiced now.

Utilizing insights gained from philosopher Michael Polanyi, Diamonti theorizes that teaching is a process of using "tacit knowledge," which is made up of rules that "have become so natural to the performer that he no longer must consciously 'think' of them when performing."

By becoming a "professional," the supervisor "has probably fallen prey to the tendency to look to other disciplines for the theory to explain his tacit knowledge. . . . This can be more of a hindrance than a help" for the reason that one comes to "understand what constitutes good teaching by identifying principles of operation that have evolved from the activity of teaching" rather than "applying insights and perspectives from other disciplines."

Given that perspective, it follows that the student teacher would gain the most from his relationship with the cooperating teacher. "Student teaching is a form of apprenticeship, and in an apprenticeship it is usually the master craftsman's responsibility to ensure that the apprentice learns the trade."

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5 **Eye, Glen G.** "Supervisory Skills: The Evolution of the Art." *Journal of Educational Research,* 69, 1 (September 1975), pp. 14-19. EJ 131 645.

Eye offers a historical survey of developments in teacher supervision, with special emphasis on recent directions.

One important current trend is the increased emphasis being placed on the idea of coordinating changes in supervision with changes in the society-at-large.

Eye's discussion of the various implied and/or stated purposes of supervision indicates a wide range of ideas. Increasingly, the purposes are changing from an emphasis on monitoring and policing to one on directing and stimulating.

A movement toward the use of team-peers is also discerned, leading to more of an emphasis on self-management and self-direction by teachers. Eye believes that the self-management movement is very promising, especially when the teachers are aided by "supervisors" who help them develop the self-management plan.

The adequate evaluation of supervision itself has been, and continues to be, sadly neglected. Recently, however, some progress has been made in this area. In some institutions, supervision has been evaluated on the basis of the supervisors' success in achieving innovations. The most positive development is the gradually increasing attempts to get teachers themselves to evaluate the supervisors.

Eye concludes by mentioning some aspects of supervision that need to be amended. The image of supervisors as "system executioners" needs to be changed, a change that would happen if the emphasis were placed on directing and stimulating rather than on monitoring and policing. As well, supervisor selection and assignment should be based on ability rather than compatibility with the administration.

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6 **Koehn, John J., and Goens, George A.** "The Talent We Nourish: A Word for Supervisors." *Educational Leadership,* 34, 8 (May 1977), pp. 585-88. EJ 164 122.

The way supervisors view people is a key element in determining how well they succeed at nourishing "the talent that will maximize learning experiences for children."

Koehn and Goens deal with that premise by reporting an imaginary dialogue between two supervisors—one articulating the traditional, inspection-based view of supervision, and the other the emergent, analysis-based growth model.

The inspection-based spokesperson expresses the belief that the top priority for the supervisor is to make sure that the teacher gets the job done. He states that the "threat of evaluation can shape up people who are doing marginal or lousy jobs. If the threat of evaluation was not there, I don't believe some teachers would ever change their ways."

His view is that teachers, like all people, "need to be controlled in order for them to get the work for the organization completed." Consequently, the supervisor is an authority figure and has an adversary relationship with the teacher. The main aid the supervisor offers is suggesting improvements and providing teachers with motivation to do their job well—primarily through fear of what will happen if they don't.

In sharp contrast, the analysis-based spokesperson expresses a view that people "are creative, have imagination, and seek responsibility. . . . They have integrity and will work toward the objectives of a school system if they are committed to them." So the key lies in developing that commitment.

Teachers' commitment is built, in part, by the establishment of a supervisor-teacher relationship "based on helping, with mutual respect, support, and understanding." The authority the supervisor has comes "only from competence and skill. If I am a capable

supervisor who can provide sound analyses and observations to teachers based upon their identified needs, then I will become significant to that person."

7 **Krajewski, Robert J.** "Instructional Supervision: Dollars and Sense." *Contemporary Education*, 49, 1 (Fall 1977), pp. 5-15. EJ 174 578.

The "education product" in public education needs to have better quality controls. To support that assertion, Krajewski cites high drop-out rates, declining SAT scores, increasingly negative public attitudes, and spiralling costs.

Effective supervision is a key element in the development and maintenance of more effective instructional programs—a necessity since the increased effectiveness of existing teaching positions is one improvement that can be made without increasing costs.

"The ultimate concern of supervision is to bring about desirable teaching and learning situations for students. It is a total effort to stimulate, coordinate, and guide the continued growth of teachers. . . ." Given that understanding of the goal, it seems apparent that supervisors should be well versed both in instructional theory and in its practical applications by teachers so they can truly help teachers to improve.

One model for an effective instructional improvement plan includes much mutual exploration by teacher and supervisor into instructional changes that will promote the welfare of the students. The teacher makes the final decisions, with the supervisor serving to point out alternatives that otherwise might be overlooked. As well, it is the supervisor's task to influence the plans so they will be as valid as possible and practically applicable. The best setting for these activities is probably the regular visits the supervisor makes with the teacher in the classroom.

Krajewski briefly describes how an instructional improvement program would work. The supervisor would visit the teacher regularly to establish rapport and allow the teacher to initiate questions and learn from the supervisor. Three or four times a year they should implement a model of evaluation that would incorporate video analysis, student ratings, teacher's self-ratings, and the Flanders' Interaction Analysis Category System. These would be used in relation to agreed-on objectives for teaching performance.

8 **McGee, Jerry C.,** and **Eaker, Robert.** "Clinical Supervision and Teacher Anxiety: A Collegial Approach to the Problem." *Contemporary Education*, 49, 1 (Fall 1977), pp. 24-28. EJ 174 580.

In large part due to the nature of teaching, which reveals the personal characteristics of teachers, the level of a teacher's anxiety while he or she is being supervised is quite high. Since supervision is essential for improving classroom instruction, some way of reducing the level of anxiety while maintaining critical supervision is necessary.

Collegial supervision has been suggested as one means of dealing with the problem. But heretofore, according to McGee and Eaker, models of collegial supervision have not been effective, largely because the evaluations have focused mainly on "efficiency" rather than effectiveness. This failure is due to the small percentage of teachers who actually visit other teachers in classroom situations.

Several recent trends, however, are making the collegial model more feasible. Most important is the increased use of team teaching, combined with increasing teacher-training levels, stability in teacher staffs, and the growth in popularity of clinical assumptions and approaches to classroom supervision.

Team teaching is based on team planning, which "provides the opportunity for frequent, realistic planning for observation of teaching." As well, trust relations among the team members are generally easily developed, a factor that should greatly reduce the anxiety level.

When the teaching performance is evaluated in comparison with the team's instructional objectives, the subjective aspect of the supervision would be greatly reduced.

Nonetheless, some anxiety is inevitable. "One suggestion to minimize anxiety in the beginning is to start with simple observation objectives and progressively move to more sophisticated observation goals."

9 **Niedermeyer, Fred C.** "The Testing of a Prototype System for Outcomes-Based Instructional Supervision." *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 13, 2 (Spring 1977), pp. 34-50. EJ 164 197.

The goal of teacher supervision, according to many contemporary educators, is to facilitate learning on the part of students. This article reports on an effort to institute a specific supervisory program and measure its effectiveness in meeting that goal.

Niedermeyer concludes that it is indeed possible to improve "the rate of program completion and pupil achievement" through the implementation of "an instructional information system" supplemented by "instructional modification strategies."

The system that was tested was implemented in a regular school curriculum over the entire school year in a large population of schools. The system's wide application greatly increased the reliability of the findings. It was emphasized that the materials and procedures utilized would make minimal time demands on the people involved and would not require outside assistance to be implemented.

The instructional information aspect of the program was primarily intended to basically just aid the supervisor and teacher in determining the adequacy of the already-existing instructional procedures. From that, it would become apparent if the teacher needed assistance. The intent was for the teacher, not the supervisor, to take the initiative if assistance was needed.

The instructional modification procedures were primarily implemented as a self-corrective approach by teachers, though cooperation with supervisors was encouraged. Structured followup meetings between teacher and supervisor were considered very important to facilitate the implementation of changes.

The system, it was discovered, was only effective when fully followed. The process included preliminary meetings to work through the information, setting of standards for student performance to be regularly monitored by the supervisor, and formulation and testing of modifications when problems surfaced.

10 **Reavis, Charles A.** "Research in Review/Clinical Supervision: A Review of the Research." *Educational Leadership*, 35, 7 (April 1978), pp. 580-84. EJ 179 220.

A dominant process for the growing field of clinical supervision has emerged. A strong emphasis is placed on the development of an atmosphere of colleagueship and mutuality in the relationship

between the teacher and supervisor.

The process includes both a preobservation conference, in which the supervisor is oriented to the class and in which the two agree on the purposes of the observation, and a postobservation conference in which the critique is made and in which plans are drawn for mutually agreed-on changes.

The supervisor observes the teaching of a lesson and analyzes the teaching in light of the stated goals and also in light of the teacher's behavioral characteristics. The supervisor, after all else is done, also analyzes his or her own performance as a supervisor.

Research on the effectiveness of clinical supervision is still somewhat limited. Nonetheless, most studies indicate that teachers favor clinical supervision over other approaches.

In general, the studies Reavis discusses do not include means of accurately comparing clinical to nonclinical supervision. That omission limits their value in showing the actual effectiveness of clinical supervision.

Still, Reavis concludes that "on balance . . . one can safely say that no study has found traditional supervision effective in changing teacher behaviors when compared to clinical supervision."

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11 **Simon, Alan E.** "Analyzing Educational Platforms: A Supervisory Strategy." *Educational Leadership*, 34, 8 (May 1977), pp. 580-84. EJ 164 121.

The videotape can be a very significant aid in teacher supervision. In particular, videotape can confront teachers with a comparison of "what they preach" with "what they practice," and thereby help them to overcome inconsistencies.

Simon outlines a four-stage process of utilizing videotape techniques that incorporates clinical supervision with some naturalistic supervision assumptions. These assumptions see "value in describing as opposed to measuring and in discovering as opposed to determining." This process allows the teachers to compare their own assumptions about teaching with what actually takes place in the classroom.

First of all, a videotaped interview between the teacher and the supervisor takes place in which the teacher is asked questions relating to his or her beliefs and values about teaching and to the specific teaching situation at hand.

Next, the actual teaching situation is videotaped. Then a videotape is made of the supervisor's attempt to evaluate the teacher's "platform-in-use" (how the teaching is actually done) and relate it to the teacher's stated values. "It is important that the construction of the teacher's platform-in-use attempts to fit the style of the teacher."

The final stage takes place when the tapes—of the interview, classroom, and supervisor's evaluations—are played back for the teacher, who then responds. The teacher's response is crucial; hopefully, it will be one of teachers "scrutinizing their ideas and strategies of teaching."

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12 **Wiles, Kimball, and Lovell, John T.** *Supervision for Better Schools, Fourth Edition.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975. 328 pages. ED 099 983.

This is the fourth edition of a basic text on teacher supervision first published by Wiles in 1950. Lovell has revised this edition, bringing it up-to-date and including some projections regarding the future of teacher supervision.

The first part of this quite comprehensive book written for supervisors discusses the nature of supervision and its historical evolution. Supervision is understood primarily as a means to facilitate a higher quality of student learning.

A chapter is devoted to helping supervisors grow in their ability to help teachers release their human potential. They should work to create an environment where all persons have a sense of community with their fellow workers. A viable support-system can lead to exploration and creativity on the part of teachers, particularly when many stimuli are available to prod them. As well, supervisors need to value the input and interpretations of their teachers and to provide sincere help for teachers with personal problems.

Communication is seen as an extremely important aspect of supervision, and it is discussed in some length. "The success of a school system is dependent upon the quality of communication in it. It is necessary to examine bulletins, meetings, conferences, and the social climate to determine whether they facilitate open and honest discussion and decisions by all or whether they lead to isolation, indifference, and covert resistance."

After discussing supervision's two main functions—curriculum development and instruction improvement—Wiles and Lovell detail a number of specifics with regard to the implementation of supervisory programs at the school district and local school levels and give some guidelines for new supervisors.

The authors emphasize giving priority to humanistic considerations in the operation of both districtwide and local supervisory teams. Clearly defined leadership is essential, but decision-making should be based more on ability and expertise than on formal positions. Open communication is a necessity, as is an atmosphere allowing flexibility, creative response, and nonthreatening interpersonal influence.

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This publication was prepared pursuant to a contract with the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Prior to publication, the manuscript was submitted to the Association of California School Administrators for critical review and determination of professional competence. This publication has met such standards. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinion of either the Association of California School Administrators or the National Institute of Education.

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